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#156

EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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17 August 1972

State Dept. review completed

Subversion Trials Winding Down?

Using his presidential power, Ludvik Svoboda on 16 August called off judicial action against ten young Czechoslovaks after they asked for pardon. Rude Pravo claimed the ten had been "seduced" by Professor Jaroslav Sabata who was found "guilty of the criminal act of subversion" on 8 August in Brno and sentenced to six and one-half years in prison.

Amnesty granted to the ten for their "irresponsible punishable activities" has led to speculation that the trials are over for the time being. For its part the Czechoslovak media have been stung by Western commentary on the trials and have displayed sensitivity to this criticism. Rude Pravo on 16 August, in a long article summing up the judicial proceedings that commenced 17 July, for the first time gave the total number of defendants and trials. To date the series runs nine, 46 convictions, no acquittals, two postponed with jails loaded. The article may be intended to signal postponement of previously planned but not yet publicly announced trials.

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Polish-East German Border Crossings May Exceed Estimates

Since the first of the year when a Polish-East German agreement made it possible for citizens of the two countries to make visits with personal identity documents only, rather than passports and visas, travel across the border has been extensive. By the end of June an estimated 6 million persons had crossed the border," with the peak tourist months of July and August still to come, Polish officials estimated then

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that the frontier would be traversed by some 12 million (7 million Poles and 5 million Germans) by the end of 1972. Recent official figures now indicate, however, that nearly 10 million people (5.1 million Poles and 4.8 million Germans) had crossed the border by early August. Year-end estimates may have to be drastically increased. (In 1971, incidentally, some 760,000 Poles and Germans crossed the border.)

The tremendous flood of travelers has left officials in both countries gasping and desperately struggling to handle the administrative problems brought on by the sheer volume of travelers. The number of border crossing points and currency exchange stations has steadily increased. On 1 August yet another crossing point -- this between Zittau, East Germany and Sieniawda, Poland at the southern-most tip of the common border -- was opened. Often, originally stationed at their respective ends of a bridge over the Oder-Neisse River, have joined to help move the flow of people on a busy day. Despite complaints by both sides that tourists are buying up already scarce consumer goods, officials are generally pleased with the results of the open-border policy which they see as a long-term contribution to easing historic Polish-German antipathy.

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Hungarian Arrest of US Citizen Not To Hinder Relations

Efforts by Ambassador Puhan to secure the speedy handling of an American recently arrested in Hungary has elicited straightforward assurances that Budapest does not want the case to damage relations that have been developing favorably. Tibor Glaz, an ex-Hungarian who left the country in 1956 and now represents Ralston-Purina in Budapest, has been charged by the regime with currency and customs violations.

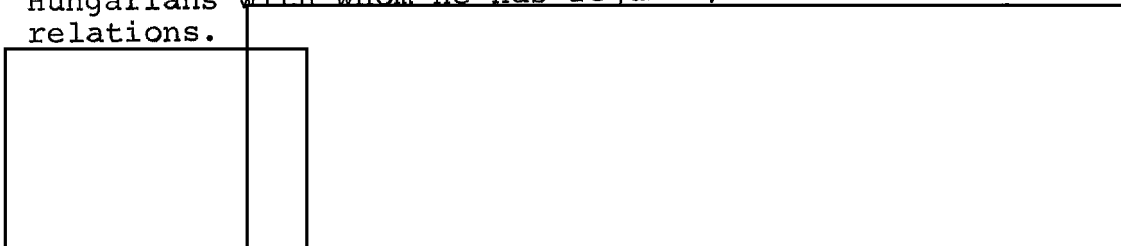
During an informal luncheon conversation with the Ambassador, Deputy Agricultural Minister Kazareczki, who recently returned from a successful month's tour of the US, assured Puhan that Budapest considers the case a small, definitely non-political matter, promised to pass on Puhan's request for speedy handling of the case to the proper authorities, and stated that the case will not prejudice Ralston-Purina's position in Budapest. To make his point about Hungary's wish for even better relations with the US, Kazareczki revealed that he had briefed his superior, deputy premier and politburo

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member Lajos Feher, on his trip and Feher had fully endorsed the projects that had been discussed. This includes inviting an official US agricultural delegation, headed by Secretary Butz, to Hungary this fall.

Kazareczki further stated that the arrest of an ex-Hungarian (and more pertinently, a "56'er") should not be taken as indicative of a general bias against such people representing US firms in Hungary. He said that there is no problem in dealing with the 99 per cent "who are better than Glaz" and then cited several ex-Hungarians with whom he has regular, smooth working relations.

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NOTE: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT
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